N°. 53. *Friday, June* 22.

——— *Bellua Centiceps.* Hor.

THERE is ſcarce any Man in *England*, of what Denomination ſoever, that is not a Free-thinker in Politicks, and hath not ſome particular Notions of his own, by which he diſtinguiſhes himſelf from the reſt of the Community. Our Iſland, which was formerly called a Nation of Saints, may now be called a Nation of Stateſmen. Almoſt every Age, Profeſſion, and Sex among us, has its Favourite Set of Miniſters, and Scheme of Government.

Our Children are initiated into Factions before they know their Right Hand from their Left. They no ſooner begin to ſpeak, but Whig and Tory are the firſt Words they learn. They are taught in their Infancy to hate one half of the Nation; and contract all the Virulence and Paſſion of a Party, before they come to the Uſe of their Reaſon.

As for our Nobility, they are Politicians by Birth; and though the Commons of the Nation delegate their Power in the Community to certain Repreſentatives, every one reſerves to himſelf a private Juriſdiction, or Privilege, of cenſuring their Conduct, and rectifying the Legiſlature. There is ſcarce a Freſh-man in either Univerſity, who is not able to mend the Conſtitution in ſeveral Particulars. We ſee Squires and Yeomen coming up to Town every Day, ſo full of Politicks, that, to uſe the Thought of

an ingenious Gentleman, we are frequently put in mind of *Roman* Dictators, who were called from the Plough. I have often heard of a Senior Alderman in *Buckinghamſhire*, who, at all publick Meetings, grows drunk in Praiſe of Ariſtocracy, and is as often encountered by an old Juſtice of Peace who lives in the Neighbourhood, and will talk you from Morning till Night on the *Gothic* Balance. Who hath not obſerved ſeveral Pariſh Clerks, that have ranſacked *Hopkins* and *Sternhold* for Staves in favour of the Race of *Jacob*; after the Example of their Politick Predeceſſors in *Oliver*'s Days, who on every Sabbath were for binding Kings in Chains, and Nobles in Links of Iron! You can ſcarce ſee a Bench of Porters without two or three Caſuiſts in it, that will ſettle you the Right of Princes, and ſtate the Bounds of the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Power, in the drinking of a Pot of Ale. What is more uſual than on a Rejoicing Night to meet with a drunken Cobler bawling out for the Church, and perhaps knocked down a little after, by an Enemy in his own Profeſſion, who is a Lover of Moderation!

We have taken notice in former Papers of this Political Ferment being got into the Female Sex, and of the wild Work it makes among them. We have had a late moſt remarkable Inſtance of it in a Conteſt between a Siſter of the *White Roſe*, and a beautiful and loyal young Lady, who to ſhew her Zeal for Revolution-Principles, had adorned her pretty Boſom with a *Sweet William*. The Rabble of the Sex have not been aſhamed very lately to gather about Bonfires, and to ſcream out their Principles in the Publick Streets. In ſhort, there is hardly

a Female in this our Metropolis, who is not a competent Judge of our higheſt Controverſies in Church and State. We have ſeveral Oiſter-women that hold the Unlawfulneſs of Epiſcopacy; and Cinder wenches that are great Sticklers for indefeaſible Right.

Of all the Ways and Means by which this Political Humour hath been propagated among the People of *Great Britain*, I cannot ſingle out any ſo prevalent and univerſal, as the late conſtant Application of the Preſs to the publiſhing of State-Matters. We hear of ſeveral that are newly erected in the Countrey, and ſet apart for this particular Uſe. For, it ſeems, the People of *Exeter*, *Salisbury*, and other large Towns, are reſolved to be as great Politicians as the Inhabitants of *London* and *Weſtminſter*; and deal out ſuch News of their own Printing, as is beſt ſuited to the Genius of the Market-People, and the Taſte of the County.

One cannot but be ſorry, for the ſake of theſe Places, that ſuch a pernicious Machine is erected among them; for it is very well known here, that the making of the Politician is the breaking of the Tradeſman. When a Citizen turns a *Machiavel*, he grows too cunning to mind his own Buſineſs; and I have heard a curious Obſervation, that the Woollen Manufacture has of late Years decayed in Proportion as the Paper Manufacture has encreaſed. Whether the one may not properly be looked upon as the Occaſion of the other, I ſhall leave to the Judgment of Perſons more profound in political Enquiries.

As our News-writers record many Facts which, to uſe their own Phraſe, *afford great Matter of Speculation*, their Readers ſpeculate accordingly, and by their variety of Conjectures,

in a few Years become conſummate Stateſmen; beſides, as their Papers are filled with a different Party-Spirit, they naturally divide the People into different Sentiments, who generally conſider rather the Principles, than the Truth of the News-writer. This Humour prevails to ſuch a Degree, that there are ſeveral well-meaning Perſons in the Nation, who have been ſo miſled by their favourite Authors of this kind, that in the preſent Contention between the *Turk* and the Emperor, they are gone over inſenſibly from the Intereſts of Chriſtianity, and become Well-wiſhers to the *Mahometan* Cauſe. In a word, almoſt, every News-writer has his Sect, which (conſidering the natural Genius of our Countreymen to mix, vary, or refine in Notions of State) furniſhes every Man, by Degrees, with a particular Syſtem of Policy. For, however any one may concur in the general Scheme of his Party, it is ſtill with certain Reſerves and Deviations, and with a Salvo to his own private Judgment.

Among this innumerable Herd of Politicians, I cannot but take Notice of one Sett, who do not ſeem to play fair with the reſt of the Fraternity, and make a very conſiderable Claſs of Men. Theſe are ſuch as we may call the *Afterwiſe*, who, when any Project fails, or hath not had its deſired Effect, foreſaw all the Inconveniencies that would ariſe from it, though they kept their Thoughts to themſelves till they diſcovered the iſſue. Nay, there is nothing more uſual than for ſome of theſe wiſe Men, who applauded publick Meaſures, before they were put in Execution, to condemn them upon their proving unſucceſsful. The Dictators in Coffee-houſes are generally of this Rank, who often